

CLAIMS

1. A method of enabling access to travel services, the method including the steps of:

5 providing a potential purchaser with a form containing information relating to a travel service transaction, the form including coded data indicative of an identity of the form and of at least one reference point of the form;

10 receiving, in a computer system, indicating data from a sensing device regarding the identity of the form and a position of the sensing device relative to the form, the sensing device, when placed in an operative position relative to the form, sensing the indicating data using at least some of the coded data; and

identifying, in the computer system and from the indicating data, at least one parameter relating to the travel service transaction.

15 2. The method of claim 1 in which said at least one parameter relating to the travel service transaction is associated with at least one zone of the form and in which the method includes identifying, in the computer system and from the zone relative to which the sensing device is located, said at least one parameter.

20 3. The method of claim 2 which includes:

receiving, in the computer system, data regarding movement of the sensing device relative to the form, the sensing device sensing its movement relative to the form using at least some of the coded data; and

25 identifying, in the computer system and from said movement being at least partially within said at least one zone, said at least one parameter of the travel service transaction.

4. A method of enabling access to travel services, the method including the steps

of:

providing a potential purchaser with a form containing information relating to a travel service transaction, the form including coded data indicative of at least one parameter of the travel service transaction;

5 receiving, in a computer system, data from a sensing device regarding said at least one parameter and regarding movement of the sensing device relative to the form, the sensing device, when moved relative to the form, sensing the data regarding said at least one parameter using at least some of the coded data and generating the data regarding its own movement relative to the form; and

10 interpreting, in the computer system, said movement of the sensing device as it relates to said at least one parameter.

5. A method of enabling access to travel services, the method including the steps of:

15 providing a potential purchaser with a form including coded data indicative of an identity of the form;

receiving, in a computer system, data from a sensing device regarding an identity of the potential purchaser and regarding the identity of the form, the sensing device containing the data regarding the identity of the potential purchaser and sensing  
20 the data regarding the identity of the form using at least some of the coded data; and

identifying, in the computer system and from the data regarding the identity of the potential purchaser and the identity of the form, a travel service transaction.

6. The method of claim 5 in which the coded data is also indicative of at least one  
25 parameter of the travel service transaction, and the method includes receiving, in the computer system, indicating data from the sensing device regarding said at least one parameter of the travel service transaction, the sensing device sensing the indicating data using at least some of the coded data.

7. The method of claim 6 which includes receiving, in the computer system, data from the sensing device regarding movement of the sensing device relative to the form, the sensing device generating data regarding its own movement relative to the form.

5 8. The method of any one of claims 2, 4 or 6 in which the parameter is an action parameter of the travel service transaction, the method including effecting, in the computer system, an operation in respect of the action parameter.

9. The method of claim 8 in which the action parameter of the travel service transaction is selected from the group comprising:

10 searching for a travel product, requesting information relating to a travel product, selecting a travel product to purchase, confirming payment for a travel product, searching for a flight, requesting information relating to a flight, selecting a flight to purchase, confirming payment for a flight, searching for a car rental, requesting information relating to a car rental, selecting a car rental to purchase, confirming payment for a car rental, searching for hotel accommodation, requesting information relating to hotel accommodation, selecting hotel accommodation to purchase, confirming payment for hotel accommodation, requesting information relating to a vacation package, requesting a quotation relating to a vacation package, selecting a vacation package to purchase, confirming payment for a vacation package, requesting information relating to a travel insurance, requesting a quotation relating to a travel insurance, selecting travel insurance to purchase, and confirming payment for travel insurance.

10. The method of any one of claims 3, 4 or 7 in which the parameter is an option parameter of the travel service transaction, the method including identifying, in the computer system, that the potential purchaser has entered a hand-drawn mark by means of the sensing device and effecting, in the computer system, an operation associated with the option parameter.

30 11. The method of claim 10 in which the option parameter is associated with at

least one of:

searching for a travel product, requesting information relating to a travel product, selecting a travel product to purchase, confirming payment for a travel product, searching for a flight, requesting information relating to a flight, selecting a flight to purchase, confirming payment for a flight, searching for a car rental, requesting information relating to a car rental, selecting a car rental to purchase, confirming payment for a car rental, searching for hotel accommodation, requesting information relating to hotel accommodation, selecting hotel accommodation to purchase, confirming payment for hotel accommodation, requesting information relating to a vacation package, requesting a quotation relating to a vacation package, selecting a vacation package to purchase, confirming payment for a vacation package, requesting information relating to a travel insurance, requesting a quotation relating to a travel insurance, selecting travel insurance to purchase, confirming payment for travel insurance, a class of travel, a fare type, an airline, a payment card type, a car type, a car equipment option, a payment card, a property type, an amenities option, a travel insurance cover type, and a travel insurance destination region.

12. The method of any one of claims 3, 4 or 7 in which the parameter is a text parameter of the travel service transaction, the method including identifying, in the computer system, that the potential purchaser has entered handwritten text data by means of the sensing device and effecting, in the computer system, an operation associated with the text parameter.

13. The method of claim 12 which includes converting, in the computer system, the handwritten text data to computer text.

14. The method of claim 13 in which the text parameter is associated with at least one of:

a travel departure location, a travel destination location, a number of travelers, an airline, a carrier, a frequent flyer membership number, a traveler name, a traveler

address, a traveler telephone number, a traveler age, a payment cardholder name, a payment card number, a payment card expiry date, a car rental pick-up location, a car rental drop-off location, a car rental pick-up date, a car make, a city, a check-in date, a number of guests, a number of rooms, a hotel chain, a hotel name, a departure date, and a trip cost.

15. The method of any one of claims 3, 4 or 7 in which the parameter is an authorization parameter of the travel service transaction, the method including identifying, in the computer system, that the potential purchaser has entered a handwritten signature by means of the sensing device and effecting, in the computer system, an operation associated with the authorization parameter.

16. The method of claim 15 which includes verifying, in the computer system, that the signature is that of the potential purchaser.

17. The method of claim 16 in which the authorization parameter is associated with payment authorization.

18. The method of any one of claims 1, 4 or 5 in which the form contains information relating to at least one of:

searching for a travel product, requesting information relating to a travel product, selecting a travel product to purchase, confirming payment for a travel product, acceptance of an order for a travel product, a flight, car rental, hotel accommodation, a vacation package, and travel insurance.

19. The method of any one of claims 1, 4 or 5 which includes printing the form on demand.

20. The method of claim 19 which includes printing the form on a surface of a surface-defining means and, at the same time that the form is printed, printing the coded data on the surface.

5 21. The method of claim 20 which includes printing the coded data to be substantially invisible in the visible spectrum.

22. The method of claim 1 or 5 which includes retaining a retrievable record of each form generated, the form being retrievable using its identity as contained in its  
10 coded data.

23. The method of any one of claims 1, 4 or 5 which includes distributing a plurality of the forms using a mixture of multicast and pointcast communications protocols.

15 24. The method of claim 1 or 4 in which the sensing device contains an identification means which imparts a unique identity to the sensing device and identifies it as belonging to a particular potential purchaser and in which the method includes monitoring, in the computer system, said identity.

20 25. The method of any one of claims 1, 4 or 5 which includes providing all required information relating to the travel service transaction in the form to eliminate the need for a separate display device.

25 26. The method of any one of claims 1, 4 or 5 in which the form is printed on multiple pages and in which the method includes binding the pages.

27. A system for enabling access to travel services, the system including  
a form containing information relating to a travel service transaction, the form including coded data indicative of an identity of the form and of at least one reference point of the form; and

5 a computer system for receiving indicating data from a sensing device for identifying at least one parameter relating to the travel service transaction, the indicating data being indicative of the identity of the form and a position of the sensing device relative to the form, the sensing device sensing the indicating data using at least some of the coded data.

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28. The system of claim 27 in which said at least one parameter relating to the travel service transaction is associated with at least one zone of the form.

29. The system of claim 27 which includes the sensing device, the sensing device  
15 sensing its movement relative to the form using at least some of the coded data.

30. A system for enabling access to travel services, the system including  
a form containing information relating to a travel service transaction, the form including coded data indicative of at least one parameter of the travel service transaction;  
20 and

a computer system for receiving data from a sensing device regarding said at least one parameter and regarding movement of the sensing device relative to the form, and for interpreting said movement of the sensing device as it relates to said at least one parameter, the sensing device, when moved relative to the form, sensing the data  
25 regarding said at least one parameter using at least some of the coded data and generating the data regarding its own movement relative to the form.

31. A system for enabling access to travel services, the system including

a form including coded data indicative of an identity of the form; and

a computer system for receiving from a sensing device data regarding an identity of the potential purchaser and the identity of the form, and for identifying, from said received data, a travel service transaction, the sensing device containing the data  
5 regarding the identity of the potential purchaser and sensing the data regarding the identity of the form using at least some of the coded data.

32. The system of claim 31 in which the coded data is also indicative of at least one parameter of the travel service transaction, the computer system receiving indicating data  
10 from the sensing device regarding said at least one parameter of the travel service transaction, and the sensing device sensing the indicating data using at least some of the coded data.

33. The system of claim 31 which includes the sensing device, the sensing device  
15 sensing its movement relative to the form.

34. The system of any one of claims 27, 30 or 32 in which said at least one parameter of the travel service transaction is selected from the group comprising an action parameter of the travel service transaction, an option parameter of the travel  
20 service transaction, a text parameter of the travel service transaction, an authorization parameter of the travel service transaction, and a picture parameter of the travel service transaction.

35. The system of claim 34 in which the action parameter of the travel service  
25 transaction is selected from the group comprising:

searching for a travel product, requesting information relating to a travel product, selecting a travel product to purchase, confirming payment for a travel product, searching for a flight, requesting information relating to a flight, selecting a flight to purchase, confirming payment for a flight, searching for a car rental, requesting



information relating to a car rental, selecting a car rental to purchase, confirming payment for a car rental, searching for hotel accommodation, requesting information relating to hotel accommodation, selecting hotel accommodation to purchase, confirming payment for hotel accommodation, requesting information relating to a vacation  
5 package, requesting a quotation relating to a vacation package, selecting a vacation package to purchase, confirming payment for a vacation package, requesting information relating to a travel insurance, requesting a quotation relating to a travel insurance, selecting travel insurance to purchase, and confirming payment for travel insurance.

10 36. The system of claim 34 in which the option parameter is associated with at least one of:

searching for a travel product, requesting information relating to a travel product, selecting a travel product to purchase, confirming payment for a travel product, searching for a flight, requesting information relating to a flight, selecting a flight to  
15 purchase, confirming payment for a flight, searching for a car rental, requesting information relating to a car rental, selecting a car rental to purchase, confirming payment for a car rental, searching for hotel accommodation, requesting information relating to hotel accommodation, selecting hotel accommodation to purchase, confirming payment for hotel accommodation, requesting information relating to a vacation  
20 package, requesting a quotation relating to a vacation package, selecting a vacation package to purchase, confirming payment for a vacation package, requesting information relating to a travel insurance, requesting a quotation relating to a travel insurance, selecting travel insurance to purchase, confirming payment for travel insurance, a class of travel, a fare type, an airline, a payment card type, a car type, a car equipment option,  
25 a payment card, a property type, an amenities option, a travel insurance cover type, and a travel insurance destination region.

37. The system of claim 34 in which the text parameter is associated with at least one of:

30 a travel departure location, a travel destination location, a number of travelers,

an airline, a carrier, a frequent flyer membership number, a traveler name, a traveler address, a traveler telephone number, a traveler age, a payment cardholder name, a payment card number, a payment card expiry date, a car rental pick-up location, a car rental drop-off location, a car rental pick-up date, a car make, a city, a check-in date, a number of guests, a number of rooms, a hotel chain, a hotel name, a departure date, and a trip cost.

38. The system of claim 34 in which the authorization parameter is associated with payment authorization.

39. The system of any one of claims 29, 30 or 33 in which the sensing device includes a marking nib.

40. The system of claim 29 or 30 in which the sensing device contains an identification means which imparts a unique identity to the sensing device and identifies it as belonging to a particular potential purchaser.

41. The system of any one of claims 27, 30 or 31 in which the form is printed on a surface of a surface-defining means and in which the system includes a printer for printing the form on demand.

42. The system of claim 41 in which the printer prints the coded data at the same time as printing the form on the surface-defining means.

43. The system of any one of claims 27, 30 or 31 in which the coded data is substantially invisible in the visible spectrum.

44. The system of claim 27 or 31 which includes a database for keeping a

retrievable record of each form generated, each form being retrievable by using its identity as included in its coded data.

45. The system of claim 41 in which, to cater for a form printed on multiple pages,  
5 the printer includes a binding means for binding the pages.